

THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously presented) A distributed ultrasound diagnostics network for diagnosing the functionality of an ultrasound system comprising:

a plurality of diagnostics computers for diagnosing the functionality of an ultrasound system containing ultrasound system functionality diagnostics software which are operated by servicepersons to download ultrasound system functionality diagnostic information from ultrasound systems; and

a central diagnostics location with which said diagnostics computers periodically communicate to transfer said ultrasound system functionality diagnostic information, whereby said central diagnostic location is a repository for ultrasound system repair, maintenance, or quality improvement diagnostic information obtained by said diagnostic computers from a plurality of ultrasound systems.

2. (Original) The distributed ultrasound diagnostics network of Claim 1, wherein said diagnostics computers comprise portable computers.

3. (Original) The distributed ultrasound diagnostics network of Claim 2, wherein said portable computers comprise laptop computers.

4. (Original) The distributed ultrasound diagnostics network of Claim 1, wherein said diagnostics computers download said diagnostic information over a network from locations remote from said ultrasound systems.

5. (Original) The distributed ultrasound diagnostics network of Claim 4, wherein said diagnostics computers further act to download diagnostic information over a direct connection at the site of said ultrasound systems.

6. (Previously presented) The distributed ultrasound diagnostics network of Claim 5, wherein said diagnostics computers upload said diagnostic information over a network to said central diagnostics location from locations remote from said central diagnostics location.

7. (Original) The distributed ultrasound diagnostics network of Claim 1, wherein said ultrasound system diagnostic information comprises information concerning ultrasound system error conditions; and

wherein said central diagnostics location operates on said ultrasound system diagnostic information by performing at least one of the following operations:

determining root causes of errors;

statistically analyzing error conditions;

utilizing said diagnostic information to eliminate error conditions from an ultrasound system; and

utilizing said diagnostic information to develop a new ultrasound system.

Claims 8-37 (Canceled)